

# Monster Trucks Rally to the Cause

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**Riverside's 1498th Transportation Co.  
and its Heavy Equipment Transportation  
Systems are mobilized.**

By Master Sergeant Ben Delaney  
Headquarters, STARC



**E**ighteen wheelers pull over. These babies have 40 wheels and that's just the trailer. Add eight more for the tractor, and you have a monster 48-wheel truck that only the U.S. Army and the Army National Guard are using. That's what you need to haul the Army's main battle tank: the 60-ton M1 Abrams. The Heavy Equipment Transportation System or HET can carry up to 70 tons. The tractor and trailer, combined, weighs 91,000 pounds when empty. It is 52 feet long, and the trailer is 12 feet wide. A special permit from CALTRANS is required to operate the truck on California's highways.

For interested truck fans, the truck and its maximum payload is 231,000 pounds. That's a bit more masculine than the hummer, and for just a little over \$458,000 you, too, can have one. Think of it: you could haul just about everything

you own on this truck: all of your vehicles, appliances, furniture—and even your house.

Almost a hundred of these vehicles were parked at Camp Roberts in February, ready to be deployed with their drivers, mostly soldiers of the 1498th Transportation Co. of Riverside, California. The 399 members of the 1498th have received their mobilization orders and are on their way to Fort Lewis, Washington for possible deployment overseas.

The Heavy Equipment Transportation System, manufactured by the Oshkosh Truck Corporation of Wisconsin, is used not only to take the Abrams tank to and from the battlefield but also to haul other heavy, tracked vehicles in the Army inventory, including the Bradley fighting vehicle, the armored personnel carrier, and the self-propelled howitzer. The California Army



PHOTO BY SSG FRANCO FEDERICA





**Nearly 100 Heavy Equipment Transport Systems stand ready at Camp Roberts waiting for the call.**

PHOTOS BY SFC STEVE PAYER



**Specialist Bruce Dobrowski of the 1498th Transportation Company checks gauges inside the HET while Specialist Sean Dobrowski looks on.**

National Guard received its first HETs two years ago. All HET drivers go through an initial 80-hour qualification course that includes learning how to load and unload a disabled M1 tank using powerful winches. Drivers receive instruction in loading and unloading, driving during night operations, and on completing routine maintenance checks.

Transporting the HETs from Camp Roberts to a seaport presents a unique set of problems. The options include driving them, shipping them by commercial truck, if possible, or sending them by rail. The option of driving them has all but been ruled out. Even though the trucks are new, breakdowns can occur enroute. The option of shipping the trucks by rail would require the trucks to be hoisted onto rail cars by cranes. That poses problems of a different kind. One way or another, the HETs will be available to the soldiers of the 1498th wherever they go. They are an integral part of the ability of the Army to position itself for battlefield operations. 🐾